

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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R 191600Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6552
INFO EC COLLECTIVE
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY MADRID

C O N F I D E N T I A L COPENHAGEN 3332

E.O.: 11652: GDS
TAGS: EEC, OVIP, DA, PO
SUBJ: VISIT OF PORTUGUESE FOREIGN AND FINANCE MINISTERS

1. THE PORTUGUESE FOREIGN AND FINANCE MINISTERS, VITOR DE SA MUCHADO AND VITOR CONSTANCIO, VISITED COPENHAGEN ON MAY 10 FOR A MEETING WITH DANISH FOREIGN MINISTER ANDERSEN. THE INITIATIVE FOR THE MEETING WAS DENMARK'S IN ITS CAPACITY AS EC PRESIDENT.

2. IN STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS AFTER THE DISCUSSIONS ANDERSEN MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. HE EXPECTS THAT THE EC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WILL AT ITS MEETING IN LUXEMBOURG ON JUNE 6 MAKE A POSITIVE PRONOUNCEMENT ON PORTUGAL'S REQUEST FOR EC MEMBERSHIP AND THAT THE ACTUAL NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN EC COUNCIL AND PORTUGAL COULD BEGIN AFTERWARD.

B. IT IS HIS IMPRESSION AFTER THE TALKS WITH THE PORTUGUESE MINISTERS THAT THE PROBLEMS CONCERNING PORTUGAL'S MEMBERSHIP

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ARE LESS THAN COMMONLY BELIEVED. THE PORTUGUESE, HE SAID, RECOGNIZE THAT THERE ARE PROBLEMS, BUT THEY ALSO HAVE THE DETERMINATION TO SOLVE THEM.

C. ANDERSEN STRESSED THAT PORTUGAL WITH ITS CLOSE CONTACTS WITH AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA WOULD BE A VALUABLE MEMBER OF THE EC.

3. FOREIGN MINISTRY DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY BECH INFORMED US CONFIDENTIALLY THAT ANDERSEN ALSO TOLD THE PORTUGUESE THAT HE BELIEVED THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP COULD BEGIN IN SEPTEMBER. THE DANES DISCUSSED THE "FRESCO PLAN" FOR ENLARGEMENT WITH THE PORTUGUESE, WHO WERE GENERALLY SATISFIED WITH THE PORTUGUESE, WHO WERE GENERALLY SATISFIED WITH IT AND THE TWO-STEP TRANSITION PERIOD IT CALLS FOR. THE PORTUGUESE TERMED THE PLAN "GOOD AND FLEXIBLE".

4. BECH NOTED THAT DESPITE APPARENT PORTUGUESE SATISFACTION WITH "FRESCO" THE DANES ARE FEARFUL THAT THE TWO-STEP TRANSITION MECHANISM COULD BE USED TO DELAY PORTUGUESE ENTRY FOR AS MUCH AS 10 YEARS. THE DANES, HE SAID, BELIEVE THAT CERTAIN SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS PERTAINING TO PORTUGUESE MEMBERSHIP COULD BE POSTPONED FOR SOME TIME BUT THAT MEMBERSHIP PER SE SHOULD NOT BE DELAYED.

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